

**November 2025**  
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 of the Dallas Magic Club

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# Our October Meeting

## October 21, 2025

Doc Grimes and doc Mike Smith. Gave their lecture on the psychology of magic.



The key points in Mike and Grimes' presentation were:

### Psychological Principles in Magic

- Demonstrated how magic tricks exploit psychological mechanisms like:
  - Inattentional blindness
  - Change blindness
  - Illusory correlation
  - Misdirection

### Magic Trick Demonstrations

- Card Trick: Showed how psychological pressure memory manipulation can influence perception

- Sponge Ball Trick: Illustrated how people can be misled through visual and sensory illusions
- Card "Sucker" Trick; showed how setting up a series of steps can create a deceptive experience

### Philosophical Approach to Magic

- They argued there are two ways to experience magic:
  - As a puzzle to be solved (analytical approach)
  - As an emotional experience (immersive approach)
- Recommended approaching magic with openness and imagination



### Educational Purpose

- Used magic as a tool to teach about cognitive processes
- Showed how magic can reveal insights about human perception and brain function
- Concluded with a Scientific American video about neuroscience and magic

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## Last Month At The DMC



### Scientific Context

- Highlighted the connection between magic performance and brain science
- Suggested that magicians intuitively understand psychological principles that scientists are now studying



The presentation blended entertainment, education, and scientific exploration of human perception.

The presentation ended with a video by Scientific American with magic and psychology experts Stephan Macknik, Susan Martinez-Conde and the gentleman pickpocket and magician, Apollo Robins.

<https://youtu.be/i80nVAwO5xU> The video is a great presentation covering many of the psychological

tricks that magicians can take advantage of:

### 1. Attention Limitations

- The human brain can only focus on one thing at a time
- When focusing on one thing, the brain suppresses awareness of other stimuli
- Magicians exploit this "one-track mind" to control attention

### 2. Attention Manipulation

- Top-down attention control: Actively directing a person's focus through instructions
- Bottom-up attention control: Using unexpected or salient stimuli to automatically draw attention
- Misdirection works by forcing concentration on one area while actions happen elsewhere

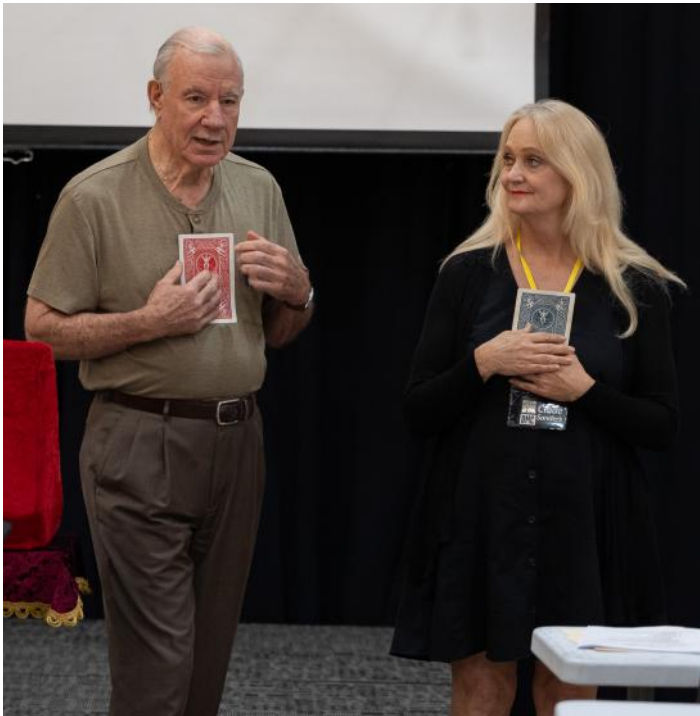
### 3. Sensory Perception Tricks

- The brain can create "sensory after-images" where a stimulus is perceived even after removal
- Neuronal adaptation occurs when neurons decrease firing in response to unchanging stimuli
- This allows magicians to create perceptual illusions that persist after the original stimulus is gone.

The video essentially demonstrated how magicians are expert manipulators of human cognitive processes, using psychological principles to create illusions that exploit the brain's natural limitations in attention and perception.

### **Meeting Magical Moments:**

Prestidigitation and Storytelling from Russell Turner kicked off the evening with a captivating performance, delving into the etymology of magic terms and sharing humorous personal anecdotes. His card trick entertained the audience with wit and wordplay.



Allen Marshall performed Ring on String.



John Montes performed an intricate card manipulation routine, skillfully creating and resolving card "chaos" (Ply it Straight by John Bannon)



Innovative Magic Technology: The floating Magic Table by Aaron Stone.

The meeting's most exciting reveal was a revolutionary magic table, 19 years in the making:



- 3D printed using advanced ASA thermoplastic
- Incredibly lightweight (30.5 ounces)
- Self-healing material that can be repaired with nail polish remover
- Capable of supporting up to 50 pounds
- Working on commercial production

— *Daniel Brookshire*  
*DMC Secretary*

# Scribbling From the Scribe of The Scroll



## **THIS MONTH AT THE DMC...**

It's Dallas Magic Club again and we have a special treat for members this month. Our own Russell Turner is going to be discussing rope magic. Russell is very creative, puts a unique spin on his magic, and is a 2-time DMC Magician of the Year. It should be a great fun night!

The meeting is TONIGHT, November 18th at...

**The Drawing Board  
1900 Jay Ell Dr,  
Richardson, TX 75081**

We hope to see you there.

## **NEXT MONTH AT THE DMC ...**

In December we will have the DMC Holiday Party and once again, instead of meeting at our regular meeting place, we will plan to go to a members home. Leticia and Daniel have volunteered to host this year. Festivities will begin at 7:00pm.

The address is  
14131 Tanglewood Drive,  
Farmers Branch, TX 75234

We will be enjoying our Annual Holiday Party complete with White Rabbit Gift Exchange. We will set the menu and the other party details at tonight's Board Meeting.

We sincerely hope that you all come out and celebrate with us.



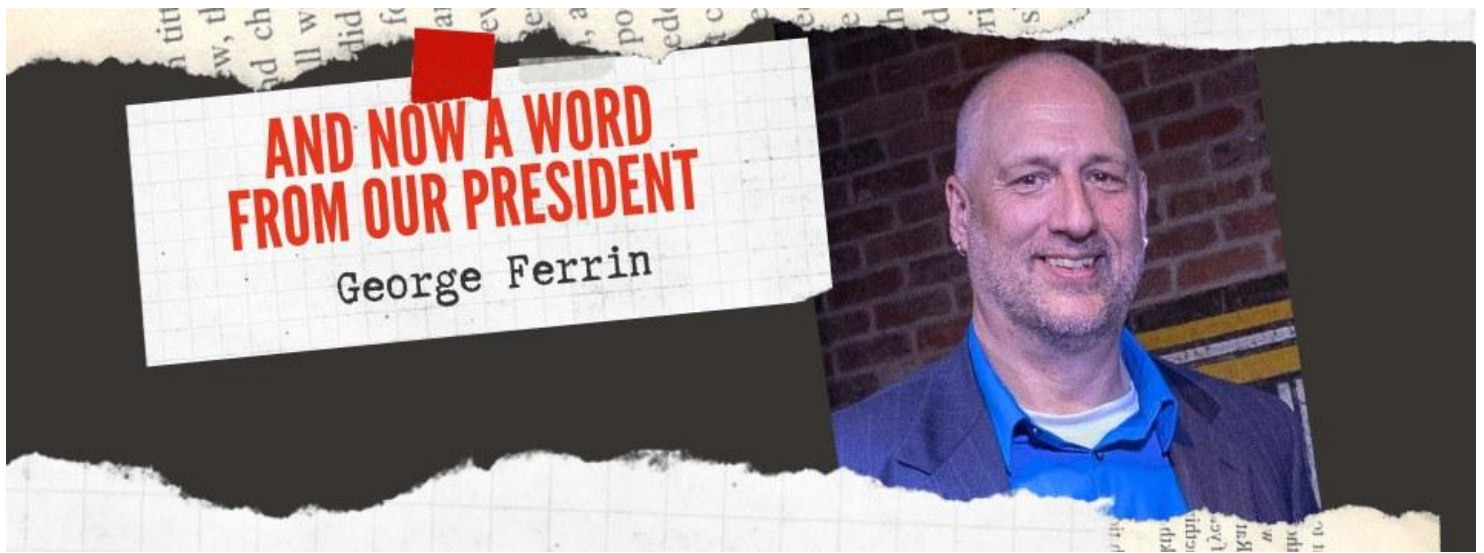
# Happy Hop-i-days!!!

We will be doing the White Rabbit Gift Exchange again at this year's DMC Holiday Party. Here are the rules we've used in the past and since they worked well then... Here we go...

The gift exchange is open to all attendees. So, if you would like to participate, read on...

- Bring wrapped gift (may also be in a gift bag as long as the gift is not visible)
- Cost between \$10 - \$20
- Gift does not have to be magic. We've had other cool collectibles, lotto tickets, etc in the past.
- Used magic ok only if in like new condition and complete.
- Participants will select gifts in a random order.
- Each participant may be stolen from once, but only once
- In past years lots of trading took place after the event





## ***The Art of Constant Growth***

The holidays are already upon us, and with them comes a season overflowing with opportunities for magicians to shine. This time of year, people are gathering—families reconnecting, companies hosting celebrations, communities organizing events—and every one of those moments is a chance for you to step in, entertain, and create wonder.

Whether you're performing casually for friends and relatives or getting hired to spice up a corporate holiday party, this season reminds us of something that often separates struggling performers from consistently working professionals: versatility.

### **Why Themed Acts Matter**

Most magicians have one main act—their comfort zone, their “A-material.” But imagine if you had multiple shows ready to go, each one crafted around a different theme. A Christmas family show full of color, nostalgia, and cheer. A New Year’s Eve adults-only performance designed to be bold, funny, and high-energy. Maybe a Thanksgiving-themed set perfect for daytime corporate luncheons. Or even lesser-used holidays—Valentine’s, St. Patrick’s Day, Independence Day, Halloween, or company-specific anniversaries.

When you have shows tailored to specific occasions, you instantly become more bookable. You’re not just another magician—they see you as the magician who has exactly what they need for this event. You’re prepared. You’re relevant. You’re plug-and-play. That’s how you stand out.

### **The Power of Having Multiple Personas**

Recently, I had the chance to see Hannibal perform at the Stanley Hotel in Colorado. His underground act was incredible: sharp, hilarious, and beautifully structured. The audience was completely hooked. But what really struck me was what happened a few hours later. In a different room, he performed a full séance. Different character. Different energy. Different world. It was like watching an entirely new performer, and he carried it with the same mastery.

That’s the mark of a true pro: the ability to shift gears, adapt to the moment, and give the audience exactly what they came for—even when the flavor of the show changes completely.

Now imagine if Hannibal only had one act. He would’ve missed the chance to perform twice in the same venue, for two totally different markets, on the same night. He would’ve missed out on income, yes—but also on the chance to create, to experiment, and to leave twice as many people talking about him afterward.

## **You Don't Need a New Act—You Need a New Frame**

Creating themed shows doesn't mean you have to reinvent your entire repertoire. Often, it's simply reframing what you already do:

- Add a holiday-specific script or story
- Adjust the tone—family-friendly, spooky, comedic, inspirational
- Change the music, staging, costume, or props
- Introduce a few anchor tricks to tie the theme together
- Build a new opener or closer that matches the holiday

You'd be shocked how a light shift in presentation can turn a standard trick into a completely new piece that feels tailor-made for the event.

### **The Business Advantage**

Event planners love performers who solve problems. When you say, "I have a Halloween show," or "I have a Christmas luncheon act that runs 20 minutes and ends with a group memory moment," you're not offering magic—you're offering a solution.

Solutions get hired.

And once you're in someone's calendar for a specific holiday, year after year, you become part of their traditions. That's when money becomes predictable. That's when a magic career becomes sustainable and professional.

### **My Challenge to You**

So here's my challenge: step outside your usual act.

Pick one holiday. One theme. One style you haven't done before. Build a mini-show around it. Test it. Refine it. Advertise it. Put it out into the world and give people a reason to book you specifically.

Magic is more than tricks—it's an experience. And themed acts allow you to create more experiences, for more audiences, in more places, throughout the entire year.

Expand your repertoire, expand your opportunities, and most of all—expand the memories you create.

Your audience is waiting.

Give them something special to remember.

*-George Ferrin*

*President, Dallas Magic Club*

# Shawn Messonnier Asks

## 12 Questions

### Nick Lacapo



Nick Lacapo is one of the most recognized magicians working today. For over a decade, he's been at the center of modern magic — performing thousands of live shows, shaping how magic is taught and sold, and helping define the future of the art.

Nick is the official magician of Penguin Magic, the largest magic retailer in the world. He's instructed over 300 products, created hundreds more, and served as the on-camera face of Penguin for millions of viewers worldwide.



#### *How/why did you get started in magic?*

I actually didn't really get into magic until a little later on. As a kid, my only exposure was watching David Copperfield on TV. I grew up on a farm and didn't even know what a theater was, so those specials felt completely foreign to me. I loved them, but I didn't think magic was something anyone could do—for all I knew, it was real.

It wasn't until David Blaine's first TV special in the late 90s that something clicked. I recorded it on VHS and kept rewinding, trying to figure out if what I was seeing was even possible. At one point I accidentally taught myself the double lift just by watching and rewatching. It felt like I had uncovered a huge secret no one else knew. From there, I tried to learn all the tricks from that special and started showing them to people whenever I got the courage. For me it was never about "I'm going to be a magician," it was more like, "Hey, I figured out this really cool thing and I want to share it with you."

When I turned 21 and started going out more socially, magic just naturally became something I could do in bars and gatherings to meet people, network, and make connections. That's really how it all started.

#### *Why kind of magic do you typically perform (stage magic/illusions, mentalism, closeup, etc.) and why did you choose this form of magic and not another form of magic?*

I still do close-up magic, but these days most of that energy goes into my work with Penguin

Magic—creating demo videos, instructional content, and learning a constant flow of new tricks.

My true passion, though, is stand-up/parlor magic. I love performing for audiences of about 30–100 people. That’s the sweet spot for me—big enough to feel like a show, but small enough that you still feel connected. In that setting I get to play not just with magic, but also with lights, sound, staging, and storytelling. It’s where I feel most creative. I didn’t really “choose” between forms of magic as much as I evolved from close-up into stand-up. Close-up was the only thing I knew for a long time, but once I discovered stand-up magic, I realized how much room there was to grow artistically.

#### ***Any mentors who've inspired or taught you?***

Too many to name, but a few stand out. Early on I got Michael Ammar’s Easy to Master Card Miracles DVDs, along with material from Bill Malone and Doc Eason. For a while, I was basically an amalgam of those three plus David Blaine. Later, I worked at a magic shop in Orlando called Theater Magic, where Attilio Sisofo taught me everything I knew about stand-up magic at the time. He was a huge influence on me becoming a stage performer.

When I joined Penguin, I was fortunate to work alongside Dan Harlan for over a decade. I can’t overstate how much I learned from him—not just about magic, but also creativity, building props, and thinking outside the box. And today, I’m lucky enough to call Michael Ammar a close friend, which is still surreal considering he was one of my earliest inspirations.



#### ***What is your typical work week like? How much of your week is practice, performing, marketing?***

My work week looks very different from most magicians. I don’t rely on corporate gigs, weddings, or trade shows. My main job is at Penguin Magic, where I spend most of my time creating demos, filming instructional videos, and developing content. That means a lot of my practice time is spent not just learning tricks, but also figuring out how to teach them clearly. It’s a different rhythm than most performers. Outside of Penguin, my favorite performance outlets are theaters and magic venues—places where the product is magic itself and the audience came specifically to see a show.

#### ***Do you have an agent or agency to book you? Do you recommend this?***

I don’t have an agent. If you can get a good one, it certainly can’t hurt—gigs are gigs, no matter how they come to you. But I wouldn’t be dependent on one. At the end of the day, magic is the easy part. The hard part is learning how to market yourself, run your own business, and build relationships.

#### ***Which is harder and why: stage magic, parlor magic, or close-up?***

Honestly, magic is just hard in general. Every format has its own challenges. For me, the hardest part isn’t sleight of hand—it’s scriptwriting, which applies to all formats. That said, stage magic is probably the hardest to access when you’re starting out. You can pick up a deck of cards and start learning close-up magic today, but stage magic requires space, equipment, and often an audience to practice on, which makes it trickier to get into.

#### ***Any tips for choosing an audience member to assist?***

I don’t bring a lot of people on stage in my show—usually once, maybe twice at most. I prefer to



keep audience interaction low, but when I do involve people, I try to pick someone who seems relaxed, smiling, and having fun. If I do bring someone up, it's usually women—I just find I work better with them on stage. But really, it's more about reading the room in the moment. For example, in one of my routines a signed bill ends up inside a baseball card. If the spectator holding it seems shy, I might let them open it in their seat. If they seem like they'll give a big reaction, I'll bring them up on stage. Flexibility is key.



***How much of what you perform is original vs. learned from others?***

Nothing I do is “purely original.” Everything stems from something I’ve learned and evolved over time. Take my signed bill in baseball card routine—it started as Doc Eason’s bill in lemon. I performed his routine word-for-word for years. When I started working the Magic Castle, I wanted something different. That forced me to reimagine the routine, and over time it evolved into something completely unique.

So while my show today feels very original, it’s all built on time-tested foundations I’ve studied, absorbed, and reshaped through performance.

***Do you prefer a single volunteer or a group and why?***

Single volunteers. Large group routines can be fun—especially in variety shows where you’re trying to kill time and mine comedy from audience interactions—but that’s not really my style. My show is tighter, and if I do bring someone up, it’s one person for one routine.

***Do you have any career goals you haven’t fulfilled yet?***

Absolutely. Early on, performing at the Magic Castle felt impossible to me—like something I’d never achieve. But over time, stand-up magic

became my focus and eventually I did get to perform there. Now it’s a regular part of my life, which is still wild to me.

My next big goal is the project I’m working on right now: building a magic venue in Chicago with a team of friends. It’s called The Hand & The Eye, a 35,000-square-foot historic mansion in downtown Chicago that will open in spring 2026. It’ll be a home for magic where not only I perform, but where we’ll bring in some of the best magicians in the world. Getting this venue off the ground is my next big mountain to climb.

***Anything else you want to add? Can readers contact you?***

Yes—if anyone ever has questions, I’m always happy to hear from fellow magicians. The magic marketplace can be confusing and overwhelming, and I try to be an honest resource. I’m on pretty much all the social platforms, and I do my best to respond to anyone who reaches out.

And of course, I hope to see many of your readers in Chicago once The Hand & The Eye opens in 2026. Thanks again for the opportunity to share my story.

***Anyone who has purchased from Penguin Magic knows Nick. He is an EXCELLENT teacher and presenter of magic. He was very kind to share his inspiration for us, and I wish him well in his new venture in Chicago!***

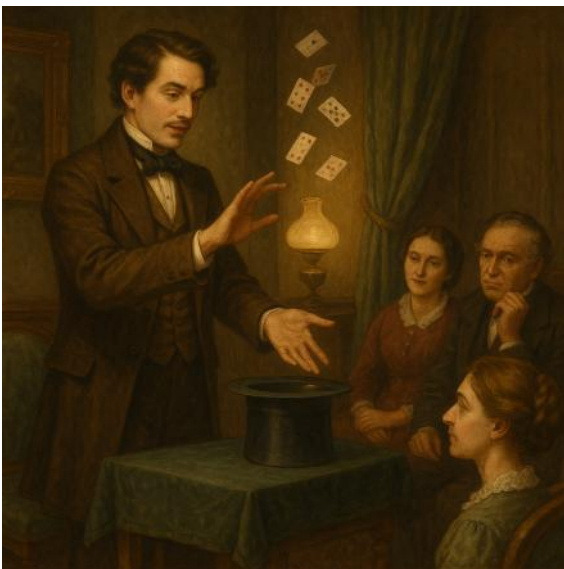
# Consequential Magic: Stories of Inspiration

by Geoff Grimes



## “Tis the Season” —Take a Lesson from Scrooge

With the haunts of October memorably behind us and the pressures of the holidays coming up, don't be a “scrooge”! As Larry Hass reminds us, “The world needs our magic.” [Well, whatever . . . somebody still needs your magic!] Such might be the abiding lesson of one of the Western literary world's most endearing works, Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

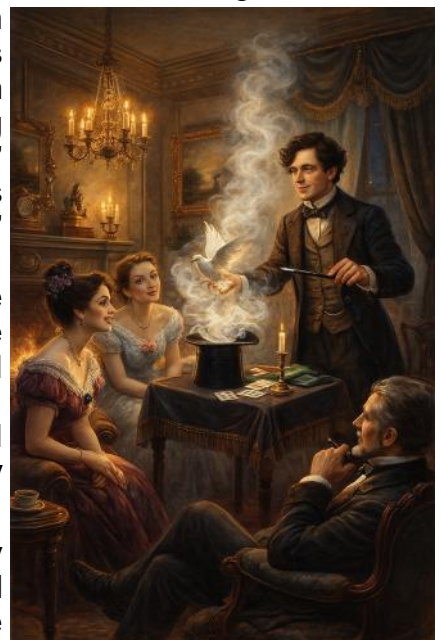


In 1843, Charles Dickens, the widely acclaimed, young English novelist, performed a free Christmas magic show to a small community of his friends and family. Earlier, he had purchased items from the estate of a British magician through a local London magic shop, and he had become hooked on magic, much to the delight of his four children and later, the fifth one, which, at that time, was “still on the way.”

It was the same year that *A Christmas Carol* introduced to the world Ebenezer Scrooge, his iconic curmudgeon. But in

1843, however, Dickens wasn't “making rent.” In fact, he wasn't “making rent” on his parents' home or those of his siblings, commitments that he had made when publishers' monthly returns had been much more substantial. In fact, with the near failure of his latest novel, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, the company had reduced the author's monthly stipend, and the whole Dickens extended family was on the brink of financial desperation. In both the short and long run, however, rather than the charms of his holiday magic shows, *A Christmas Carol* provided the financial magic that helped save his own “dearly beloveds” from the British “poor house”!

The narrative line of *A Christmas Carol* is familiar to many Western readers. Ebenezer—a humbug and self-centered misanthrope—is awakened in the middle of a wintry night by the



ghost of Jacob Marley (Scrooge's deceased business partner), weighted down by the chains of a life "lived without compassion." The ghost informs him of three "visitations" to follow: the "Ghost of Christmas Past," the "Ghost of Christmas Present," and the "Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come." The latter reveals Scrooge's own degradation and the disrepute his memory will suffer among families and friends he has spurned throughout his life. The illusions conjured by the apparitions are consequential and personally transformative. Overnight, Scrooge becomes an unassuming philanthropist, and in time, befriended, newly respected, and revered.

Over the following decades, to the literary lay public, *A Christmas Carol* would become Dickens' most identifiable work. Central to that enthusiasm was the tale's four spirits who work their consequential and transformative magic over Dickens' hero. So popular were they that within weeks of the work's appearance in London's bookstalls, dramatic companies were performing "spirit shows" in the theaters of many of the major British cities, selling out venues, and laying the foundation for the heyday of spiritualism that would dominate much of both stage and parlor magic by the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Dickens' ghosts influenced the transformation of the English literary "Gothic" genre in which such phantasmas were typically vengeful (the ghost of Shakespeare's Hamlet, for example), horrific (the "ghostly nun" in Charles Maturin's 1820 *Melmoth the Wanderer*), and bone-chilling (the "child ghost" in Emily Bronte's 1847 *Wuthering Heights*). But Dickens' four ghosts set both the style and the tone for the whole "Bizarre" scene of the latter 19th-century's fascination with the séance, through which the "other world's citizenry" were to become cozy, neighborly, demonstrable, and—most entreatingly—accessible-on-demand!

Looking back at my humble beginnings in magic, I still remember the first remunerations from my early magic shows. On the one hand, you had the cold chicken-and-green-peas plate. On the other hand, you had the



unexpected \$5 and \$10-dollar tips slipped in your hand by the preacher and other members of the congregation as you were packing up. The cold chicken plate was "nice," but in short order, my expectations soon sided with the tips. They would set the tone for queries later in my magical life.

More generally, I think all of us have cringed at one time or another, to hear over the phone a prospective's client's appeal. Adapted from *A Christmas Carol*, it went something like this:

**Tiny Tim:** “Well, we don’t really have very much money, but you’ll get a lot of exposure, and you can pass out your business cards!”

**Scrooge:** “Yeah, right!” Like, ‘Excuse me! If you don’t have any money, you don’t have any [of my] magic!’ [I mean, really! Have you seen the price of business cards lately!!!]

**Tiny Tim:** “But look at the experience you’ll get!”

**Scrooge:** “Yeah, right, again! I performed my first magic show when I was 12, and I’m 82 years old, come December! I don’t think I need that much more ‘experience!’”

**Tiny Tim:** “Well, what size T-shirt do you wear? We’re giving our free commemorative T-shirts this year!”

**Scrooge:** “Been there! Done that! And got the [damn] T-shirt.”

[Click!]

But isn’t there another “script”? I’m thinking now of the scripts informing the good works of programs like “Magicians without Borders,” “MagicUSA,” “Magicians On Mission,” David Copperfield’s “Project Magic,” and Hank Feinburg’s “Magic in Hospitals” for the SAM.

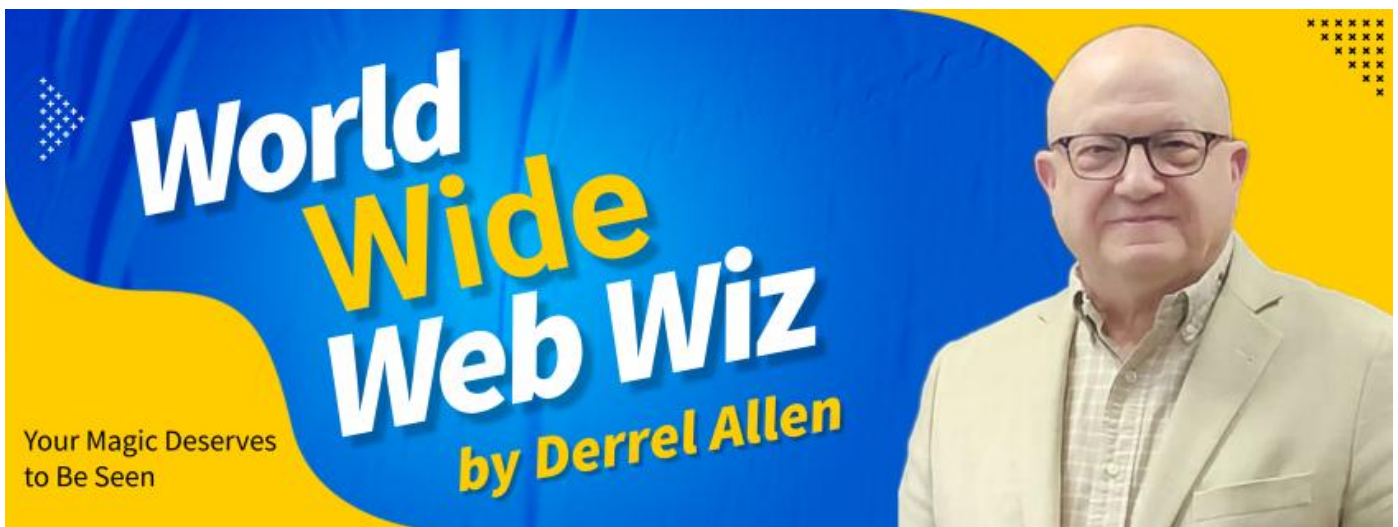
And those are only the national projects. Locally, we have many opportunities to serve others with our magic. Some that come to mind include such examples as the “Birthday Brigade,” the Ronald MacDonald’s House, and the “Night Owls” of Highland Park’s First Methodist Church, and the public shelters for the homeless, the Red Cross initiatives, and local fundraising venues that serve “the needy” with which we can just sign up. It’s not just the high-dollar “country club set” that needs our magic! So, why not take a lesson from Scrooge?

What will be our legacy? More to the point, our “magic’s legacy”? Must we wait, like Scrooge, to be awakened in the middle of the night by “not-so-heavenly [g]hosts” to remind us of our own mortality and the consequences of “a life lived without compassion”? Make that, “a magic performed without compassion”? How can we make our seasonable magics throughout the year a little more “cozy, neighborly, demonstrable, and—most entreatingly—accessible-on-demand”? Might the value of our magic—to ourselves as well as our clients—be measured in something other than what we submit on an invoice?



*J'm Just Sayin' ...*

*Doc Grimes*



## Getting Views For Your Instagram Posts

This is a follow-up to last month's articles, but focusing on Instagram.

Let me start with a confession: most of my Instagram posts get modest engagement. A few dozen views here, maybe a hundred there. But three recent posts shattered those numbers, and the reason why taught me something crucial about Instagram marketing that every magician needs to understand.

The secret isn't better tricks. It isn't fancier editing. It's something far simpler—and far more powerful.

### *The Collaboration Effect*



My highest-performing post hit 1,314 views. It was a simple photograph of me, my daughter, and world-renowned magician Giancarlo Bernini, who has 20.8k followers. No special effects. No viral gimmick. Just three people in a photo.

Another post, a chance meeting with Mr Armand (2.4k followers) at a Dunkin' in Las Vegas, pulled 503 views. Again, nothing fancy—just documentation of a moment with someone who has an established following.

The pattern became impossible to ignore when my daughter and I did a cheese pull challenge—except we used chicken tenders at Chili's. We tagged Chili's social account and collaborated with my daughter's account (500+ followers). That post? 2,995 views as of this writing—nearly triple my next best-performing content.

What do all three have in common? Collaboration with accounts that have more followers than mine.

### *It's Not About You (Sorry)*

Here's the hard truth: your audience doesn't care as much about what interests you as they care about what interests them. I love close-up magic. I could post intricate sleight-of-hand all day long. But Instagram's algorithm and human psychology don't reward self-indulgence—they reward relevance.

When you collaborate with someone who has more followers, you're not just getting exposure to their audience. You're borrowing social proof. You're creating content that exists at the intersection of multiple audiences, which Instagram's algorithm loves to promote.

The biggest mistake I see magicians make on Instagram? Posting way off-topic content that means something to them but nothing to their audience. Your followers came for magic, mentalism, or entertainment. If you're posting about your breakfast burrito (unless there's a magical twist), you're training people to scroll past your content.

## *The Strategic Approach to Collaboration*

So how do you actually implement this? Start with your existing network. Go through your friends and followers right now—not later, right now—and identify people who have more followers than you and whose audience might appreciate magic content.

The key is attainability. Don't start by DMing David Blaine. Look for:

- Fellow performers with 500-5,000 more followers than you
- Local businesses with established social presence (your favorite coffee shop, popular restaurants, boutique stores)
- Coworkers or friends who've built audiences in complementary niches

The goal is mutual benefit. That coffee shop gets entertaining content featuring their location. You get exposure to their local following. That's a trade both parties can feel good about.

## *Format Vs. Content: The Instagram Professionals' Secret*

Here's advice straight from Instagram professionals that changed my approach: look at trending posts and Reels, then replicate their format, not their content.

Notice I said format, not content. If everyone's doing a "day in the life" style Reel, create a "day in the life of a magician" version. If photo carousels showing before/after transformations are trending, adapt that format to show your setup process for a show. If reaction videos are hot, film reactions to your magic.

The format is what the algorithm recognizes and rewards. The content is where you inject your unique value as a magician.

## *Reels Vs. Stories: Know Your Tools*

Let's clarify two critical features that serve different purposes:

**Instagram Reels** are your discovery engine. They're designed to reach people who don't follow you yet. Reels appear in the Reels tab, in the Explore page, and can go viral beyond your existing audience. This is where collaboration really shines, because tagged accounts and shared audiences amplify reach exponentially.

**Instagram Stories** are your retention tool. They keep your existing followers engaged with behind-the-scenes content, quick updates, and daily touchpoints. Stories won't typically bring in new followers, but they keep your current audience warm and attentive.

Most magicians under-utilize Reels and over-think Stories. Flip that ratio. Put your collaboration content, your trending format adaptations, and your best performance clips into Reels. Save the casual, unpolished moments for Stories.

## *The Action Plan*

Here's what to do this week:

1. Audit your followers and friends list for collaboration opportunities
2. Reach out to 3-5 potential collaborators with specific ideas (not vague "let's work together sometime" messages)
3. Identify three trending Reel formats and plan magic-specific adaptations
4. Create at least one collaborative Reel featuring another account with more followers
5. Tag relevant businesses or locations when appropriate

Remember: engagement follows eyeballs. You can't engage an audience that never sees your content in the first place. Collaboration is how you break through Instagram's noise and get those views.

Your magic deserves to be seen. Now you know how to make that happen.

*Need help developing your Instagram strategy or other marketing approaches for your magic business? I offer marketing consultations for magicians. Let's talk about taking your visibility to the next level.*

*Want to connect? Follow me at @willastoundyou for magic content or @totalonlinemarketing for marketing insights. I'm always open to collaboration opportunities!*

# Dal Sanders The Magic Maniac



## A TRUE MAGICIAN PART 4

This month I continue the discussion of the Eight Traits of a True Magician That we teach kids in our magic classes at the Dallas Magic Academy. The Fourth Trait we teach is a True Magician is Confident. Confidence is an extremely important thing for a kid to learn. If you spend any time with children at all you know that most lack the confidence to even speak up in class and answer the simplest questions. I've even known kids to lack enough confidence to even say their names. It's not just kids either. Last week I got to visit one of the area Clown Alleys (that's what they call their clown clubs). They had a visitor that was so shy that if you talked to her at all, she would immediately look down and stare at her feet. She had a crippling lack of confidence.

### A True Magician is...

- Respectful
- Prepared
- Enthusiastic
- Confident
- Humble
- Creative
- Authentic
- Giving

Confidence is essential to being a magician. Performing magic for others is like offering a gift to other people. If you deliver that gift without confidence, it's almost as if you are devaluing that gift and making it seem worthless. Magic is much stronger when you stand tall and believe in yourself.

So what does it take to be confident? Oddly enough, the first thing you need is to be enthusiastic. Last month I said that Magic is much more interesting to an audience when YOU are excited about what you are doing. Enthusiasm is contagious. When you are having fun onstage, you are encouraging your audience to have fun.

The next thing you need to be confident is to be prepared. Know your act, your script and where your props are. Know what you will say and do. Make a plan. Then make a back up plan.

The last key to confidence is to be respectful. This is such an easy trait for magicians to forget. It's not only important for us to remember to be respectful to our audiences, but we also should be respectful audience members. It just isn't right for magicians to heckle from the back of the room. Unless you are onstage, you are not part of the act.

I hope you noticed that the three things you need to build confidence and also the first three traits of a True Magician. That isn't an accident, that was by design. Magic is an art that hides it's skill. Most arts have the skill and the abilities on open display, whether it's music, acting, painting, photography or sculpting. Magic is the only art that audiences don't see the actual work. All art is created to evoke a feeling, communicate an idea, or simply be appreciated for its form or beauty but magic is the only art that I can think of that is only successful when the audience doesn't see it happening, they only see the result of it happening. That's why these traits are so very important. We are in the business of making people feel something. Hopefully, we are committed to making that experience a good one for our audiences. That's why we need to be confident...and to be confident we also need to be enthusiastic, prepared and respectful.

*...as always, this is just my opinion, I could be wrong.*

*— Dal Sanders*

# *The Spelling Game*

## *Holiday Edition*

*A Magical Routine by Dal Sanders*

Back in the 1990s David Kay (aka Silly Billy) published one of my routines in his MAGIC MAGAZINE column "Turn It Around". I was honored to be included in his column and was pleased to hear how many people had adapted that routine for their own shows. Little did I know that half a world away, a magician from the UK would put a Harry Potter spin on it. Last January at KAX Jimmy Carlo brought me a gift from England. It was the Harry Potter version of The Spelling Game and Jimmy was the magician that put it together after reading my routine.

I enjoyed doing that routine but after a couple of years, I felt that the original was just too long so while writing a new show, "Be What You Want To Be...and School Is The Key" I streamlined the routine and gave it a new "kicker" ending. It is shorter and there is one "move" that might be a little tricky but it is a strong routine that is fun for the audience and the performer. That routine was included in David Kay's 2016 book, *Super Sized SILLY*.

Now I've rewritten that routine for the holidays... Please Enjoy.

## **Holidays Are Awesome**

### **Equipment**

This routine uses a stack of cards with words on them, and these words are words that all kids (hopefully) can spell. If they do have any trouble however, I also have all the "spelling words" on a sign that sits on an easel behind me. This sign also has helped me remember the order that the words are to be spelled. The sign looks like this—

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. ELF</b></li><li><b>2. SANTA</b></li><li><b>3. SNOW</b></li><li><b>4. PRESENT</b></li><li><b>5. PARTY</b></li><li><b>6. TREE</b></li></ol> |
|---|



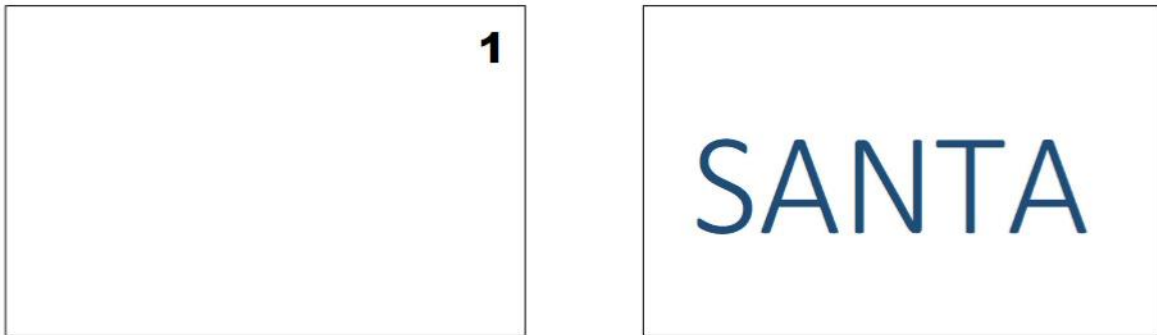
I also have nine laminated 11X14" cards with these words written on them.

**PRESENT  
TREE  
AWESOME  
HOLIDAYS  
SNOW  
ELF  
IS  
PARTY  
SANTA**

## **Set Up**

Since I spell the words from the backs (the sides with no words) to the front of the stack I have small numbers from one to nine in the upper right hand corners of the backs of the cards. Therefore, Santa has a number 1 on it, Party=2, Is=3, Elf=4, Snow=5, Holidays=6, Awesome=7, Tree=8, and Present=9.

(See figure 2)



The numbers on the back also make it easy to reset the cards. I put all the cards face down and get them in order 1-9 with the number 1 on top. You are now ready to perform the trick.

## **Routine**

“Did you know that parents get worried about their students over the holidays? It's true! They are worried that you kids will forget everything you've learned while you're out for the holidays. I think we should practice our school work. How about Spelling? Just for fun, let's play a very special SPELLING BEE GAME! If you'd like to be on the KIDS TEAM, let me see you smile really big!”

Get three kids from the audience—I usually use two girls and one boy, I have the boy stand in the middle. Plus pick one parent pretending you think they are a student. Ask kids names and grades first then ask parent their name and grade.

“Parents can't be on the kid's team, but that's OK. You can be our GROWN UPS TEAM!”

Sometimes parents are just too sensitive. I always tell this person what I am doing before the show so they are sure to be in the room. If you have an assistant, your assistant could come out and help position helpers, whispering to the parent to play along and they will be the hero in the end. I also have the kids stand to my right and the parent stand to my left. I now show the large sign with all of the words on it and put it on the easel.

"I have some cards with words on them about the holidays that are really easy to spell."

I show some of the cards and I show that they are different by showing various words. **BE VERY CAREFUL NOT TO SHOW THE AWESOME CARD WHEN YOU DO THIS!** I always start with "PARENT" (it's on the back of the stack) but the other words depend on whatever you cut to.

"As we spell the words, every time we say a letter, we'll move one card from the front of the stack (the blank side) to the back (the side of the stack with writing). Then -- the next card we turn over should be the word we spell."

When I say the word spell, I turn the whole stack of cards over and let the kids see the front card because it says spell. I will also try to fan the first three cards after I turn the stack of cards back over. This will make it easier to grip the cards for the next segment.

"Let's try one for practice... What do you expect to see over the holidays, How about an Elf? The first word on our list is the word ELF. It should go like this E-L-F."

As you say each letter, move one card from the front of the stack to the back.

"Now the next card should be the word ELF," (Turn the next card over) "And it is!"

Be sure to discard the ELF card.

"Each word will be worth **AT LEAST** one point but some will be worth more." At the end of the game the team with the most points wins. Let's play! (Turn to the first kid.)

"Can you spell Santa? S-A-N-T-A."

Move each card to the back of the stack and turn the next card around

"That's correct! The kids get one point!"

Discard SPELL card and turn to the parent.

"Here's a good word... Spell the word - Snow! S-N-O-W (Move each card to the back of the stack and turn the next card around) "Awesome? This isn't one of our words. I mean, you **ARE** an awesome parent, but the word was SNOW." (Put the AWESOME card on the bottom of the stack.) Let's see if the kids can get it. (Turn to the second kid) Can you spell Snow? S-N-O-W.

Move each card to the back of the stack and turn the next card around

Snow is correct, so the kids get two points!

Discard WORD card and turn to the parent.

"Don't worry. You'll catch on soon. You couldn't **POSSIBLY** miss this next word. Spell Present." P-R-E-S-E-N-T

Move each card to the back of the stack and turn the next card around

"Awesome? I'm sure your presents are awesome, but we want the word present."

Put the AWESOME card on the bottom of the stack. Turn to the third kid.

Can you spell Present? P-R-E-S-E-N-T." (Move each card to the back of the stack and turn the next card around) "PARENT is right so the kids have three points!"

Discard PARENT card and turn to the parent.

"I think I know what's going on here. You must be thinking about what AWESOME this is, Right? Well the kids again, they know how to PARTY! (Turn to the first kid) Can you spell Party? P-A-R-T-Y.

Move each card to the back of the stack and turn the next card around

"LEARN is correct! The kids have four points"

Discard LEARN card. And turn to parent. Casually split the cards with two cards in each hand.

"That's Four Points for the Kids and Zero for the Parents."

Gesture to the kids with the cards in one hand and to the parents with the cards in the other hand. Wow! I'll bet you're thinking you'll never catch up. Well, now's your chance.

Casually put bottom 2 cards on top of top 2 (reverse the stack) as you say the next line.

That's not true because this next word is the MY FAVORITE WORD IN OUR GAME and it's worth four points all by itself. It's the word TREE.

If you do this right the audience will never realize that you have changed the order of the cards. At this point, the magician will take the last few cards left and do the spelling himself.

"T-R-E-E." (Move each card to the back of the stack and turn the next card around.) AWESOME? Now you have me doing it!" (Put the AWESOME card on the bottom of the stack. Give the cards to the parent.) "Here, you try it!" T-R-E-E. (Be sure the parent moves each card to the back of the stack and turn the next card around.) Tree is correct! The kids have four points, the parents have four points and we have a tie!"  
The magician discards TREE card.

Wait, we still have three cards left, let's all read these last three word together on the count of three.

The magician hands top card to helper on far right, second card to middle helper, and last card to helper nearest him. He stage whispers to hold them close to their bodies and not show them. The blank sides face the audience.

"One, two, three! Turn them around! Holidays Are Awesome! Let's give our helpers a big round of applause!

Feel free to try this fun routine in your shows. For over 25 years I've had a blast with the various versions of this routine. The best part is, audiences love it and remember it.

Have a GREAT Holiday and...

*Always believe in magic—*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Del Sanders". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## GRANT PRICE AT LIVE!...

Grant Price has been an entertainer all his life. His biggest pet peeve is entertainment that is impersonal, offensive, or condescending. He has witnessed too many performers with an air of "I'm smart, I'm cool, just shut up and watch me." This isn't the demeanor of quality entertainment.



An evening of Mind-reading and magic curated by Mentalist Grant Price.

Thursday and Friday, November 20 and 21. at 7:00 and 9:15 pm Tickets start at \$56 and are limited.

**Live! By Loews in Arlington.**  
[CLICK HERE FOR TICKETS.](#)

## THE COMEDY ARENA IN DECEMBER

Dal Sanders will be returning to the Comedy Arena in McKinney on Saturday, December 6th. Doors open at 5:00 pm for a 5:30 show. Dal will be performing his themed holiday magic show which includes magic and comedy with a little Christmas Spirit.



This will be a great time to get out to McKinney and enjoy the ambiance of this great town and catch some magical fun at the same time. For tickets please [CLICK HERE.](#)

## WE WANT TO PROMOTE YOU TOO...

Have you got a public show or appearance coming up. Our magic club is very supportive and often show up (and buy tickets) to see magic and magicians...even local ones. We WANT to promote your shows. Please forward your show info plus art to the Scribe's servant at [dalsanders@gmail.com](mailto:dalsanders@gmail.com).

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## MAGIC IN THE LIVING ROOM...

Our Magic in the Living Room Holiday Show will be December 2nd. As our last show of 2025 you can expect that we will have a full house with a lot of surprises as we kick off the holiday season. Who knows, you might even get to meet Santa Claus and have Mrs. Clause sit in your lap.



This month "The Unusual Suspects" will include Dal and Cinde Sanders, Ian Richards, Shawn Messonnier, Matt Howard, Aaron Stone and the MitLR debut of some NEW acts. Of course we will still have Close Up Magic by Daryl Howard and a couple of other surprises.

This all happens at The Line Public House – 940 E. Beltline Rd., Richardson, TX. [CLICK HERE for tickets.](#)

## THE IMPROV IN ADDISON...

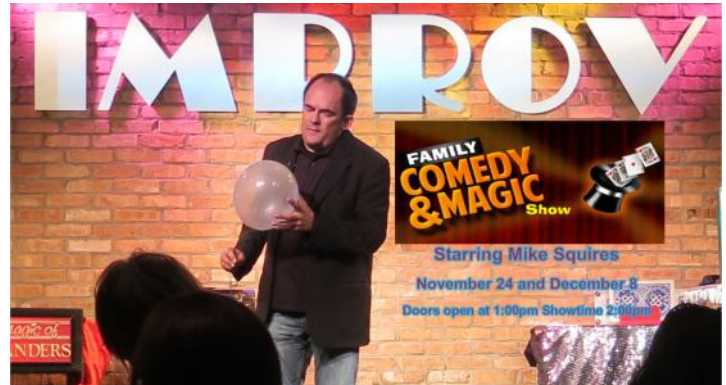
DFW's longest running magic show returns to the Addison Improv every other Saturday at 2pm.



Go to [www.improvaddison.com](http://www.improvaddison.com) for ticket info.

## THE IMPROV IN ARLINGTON...

Mike Squires headlines shows at The IMPROV in Arlington on alternate Saturdays. Mike will casually blow your mind. Doors open at 11:00am for lunch and the show starts at Noon.



Go to [www.improvarlington.com](http://www.improvarlington.com) for tickets.

## MORE DFW MAGIC...

**Fort Worth Magic Club** – 1st Thursday of each month – 4055 International Plaza, Fort Worth, TX 76109 – [www.fortworthmagiciansclub.org](http://www.fortworthmagiciansclub.org)

**Fort Worth SAM 138 Alliance of Illusionists** – meets on the Third Thursday of every month at 7:00pm - Illusion Warehouse - 3917 McCart Ave, Fort Worth. For more information go to [www.sam138.com](http://www.sam138.com)

**Mid Cities Magic Circle** – meets on the second Tuesday of every month online. This group is not really a magic club at all. It is more like a Special Interest Group that meets together every month to learn more about the Art of Magic. Contact: Geoff Grimes at 972-740-3125 or email him at [ggrimes1@aol.com](mailto:ggrimes1@aol.com)

**Mark Wilson Magic Club** - Meets at Dallas College-Mountain View Campus. Check out their new website at [www.mvcmagicclub.com](http://www.mvcmagicclub.com)

**Second Saturday Magic Sale** – Magic, Etc., Fort Worth's premier magic shop hosts a Second Saturday Sale every month where magicians can score good savings on props and supplies. Magic, Etc. is located on Forest Park Boulevard at I-30 in Fort Worth.

**Thanksgiving**  
Confetti Eddie  
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**MAGIC**  
**SHOW**

**Confetti Eddie**



**Fred Daisy**



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**Saturday November 29, 2025 5pm**  
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Brice Harney's magic experience is as vast as the state in which he resides. The Dallas-based magician began his journey on a 4 year international tour with one of the college circuit's most sought after shows.

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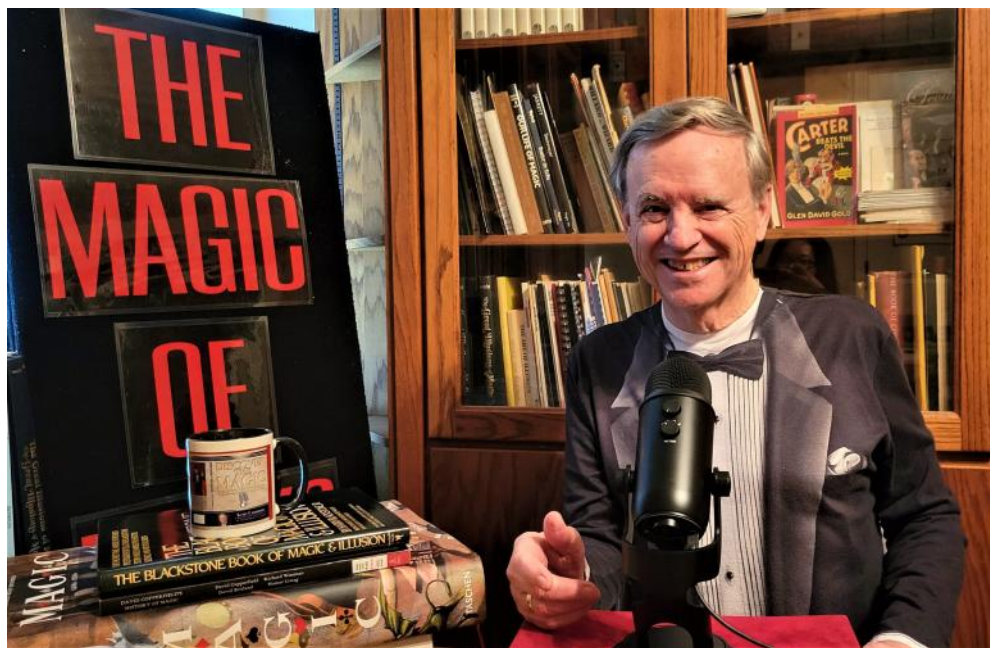


DALLAS MAGIC ACADEMY

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# Tales from the Fantastic Magic Center

"Tales from the Fantastic Magic Center" is the new podcast from "The Fantastic Kent Cummins," Past President of TAOM and founder of the World Famous Austin Magic Auction and Fantastic Magic Camp.



The free weekly podcast showcases the amazing experiences and artifacts from a career spanning more than seven decades as a magician! (Kent calls it, "The REAL secrets of magic!").

Kent shares seeing Blackstone Senior perform, meeting Harlan Tarbell, and other fascinating stories from his Fantastic Magic center in Georgetown, Texas. [CLICK HERE to start listening!](#)

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Harry Lorayne was a very influential figure in both the world of magic, particularly card magic, and in the realm of memory training. Harry was often referred to by this Star Wars character's name?



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This month The Dallas Magic Club will meet at

## **The Drawing Board**

1900 Jay Ell Dr,  
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[CLICK HERE FOR AN INTERACTIVE MAP TO THE LOCATION](#)

**Please Join us TONIGHT**

**November 18, 2025 at 7:00 pm for our**

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